

HOUSE BILL NO. 238

INTRODUCED BY M. MILBURN

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A STATE TEEN DRIVER SAFETY DAY AS AN OFFICIAL DAY OF OBSERVANCE IN MONTANA TO PROMOTE TEEN DRIVER EDUCATION AND SAFETY."

WHEREAS, Congressman Charlie Dent (R-PA) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced a resolution creating a National Teen Driver Safety Week in response to several tragic crashes involving Pennsylvania high school students and the first annual National Teen Driver Safety Week was held October 15 through 20, 2007; and

WHEREAS, many people, especially teenagers, do not realize the consequences of driving while distracted and education is needed in order for teenagers to become more aware of the dangers they face while driving; and

WHEREAS, a national survey shows that two out of three teenagers use cell phone text messaging while driving, which has been found to increase the chances of a car accident by 50%; and

WHEREAS, other distractions while driving include talking on a cell phone, eating, dealing with personal hygiene, and adjusting music and, according to the federal government, more than 30% of all car crashes in the United States involve a distracted driver; and

WHEREAS, because 77% of fatal crashes involving 16-year-olds behind the wheel are caused by driver error, it is apparent that education could significantly lower the number of fatal car accidents; and

WHEREAS, car crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in the United States, about 10 teenagers between 16 and 19 years of age die in teen driver car accidents every day, and teens make up only 6.7% of all motorists even though they account for 14% of fatal car crashes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, officials say that teens' inexperience and recklessness on the road have a lot to do with the deadly statistics; and

WHEREAS, 18 states, not including Montana, have focused on the specific problem of teen driving and cell phone text messaging while driving and have made text messaging while driving illegal; and

WHEREAS, since 2007, approximately 21 states have recognized National Teen Driver Safety Week and planned specific activities targeting teen drivers; and

WHEREAS, establishing a state Teen Driver Safety Day is an important tool for raising awareness about

1 the tragedy of teen driver car crashes, will spark communication among teenagers, their parents, and civic
2 leaders about the causes of and solutions to teen driver car crashes, and will encourage self-
3 reflection by teen drivers.

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5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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7 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. State teen driver safety day.** (1) To increase public awareness and
8 promote teen driver safety, the third Tuesday in October is designated teen driver safety day and is an official day
9 of observance.

10 (2) All Montanans are encouraged to participate in special observances and exercises throughout the
11 state on this day in order to educate teens about the fatal consequences of distractions while driving and to
12 promote teen driver safety. The governor and the office of public instruction may officially recognize and
13 encourage the observances and exercises described in this section.

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15 NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
16 integral part of Title 1, chapter 1, part 2, and the provisions of Title 1, chapter 1, part 2, apply to [section 1].

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